

4783, the Claims Resolution Act, and Cobell and Pigford II settlements now included.

In 1996, Indian plaintiffs, including Eloise Cobell, filed a class action suit against the federal government for mismanagement of Indian trust land and other assets. During the 13 years that followed, courts repeatedly ruled in favor of the plaintiffs assertions that the government violated its trust responsibility, did not provide accurate accounting, and did not provide Indians with their share of the revenue from the Individual Indian Money (IIM) accounts. One year ago, on December 8, 2009, the plaintiffs and the U.S. Interior and Justice Departments announced a \$3.4 billion settlement for this long-running suit.

This settlement should have been approved by Congress in a timely manner. Too many deadlines for Congressional action have passed this year, requiring the settlement parties to keep extending the approval deadline. Tribal members whose trust accounts were mismanaged have waited too long for compensation. Already this year, I have voted for funding the settlement twice. Both times the funding passed the House only to have the funds stripped by Republican obstruction in the Senate. Finally, on November 19, the Senate passed the approval for the settlement in the Senate Amendments to H.R. 4783, the Claims Resolution Act, and sent it back to us.

In addition, I applaud the \$1.15 billion settlement of the Pigford II class action lawsuit for finally rectifying an injustice that is an inexcusable stain on our Nation's history. In 1910, African American farmers owned 15 million acres of land. Now, that number has dwindled to two million acres. This settlement represents an important step forward towards ensuring the fair and equal treatment of all farmers, regardless of their race.

These injustices have been perpetrated for decades, and today the House has the opportunity to vote again to uphold our end of the trust relationship with all American Indians and Alaska Natives and settle discrimination claims made by African American farmers.

Though these funds come decades too late for many of the people affected, it is important for the U.S. Government to recognize the many past wrongs inflicted on the indigenous people of this country and black farmers who have been discriminated against. This is a vote that will make a difference in hundreds of thousands of lives, finally beginning to right some wrongs.

For far too long, American Indian trust account holders and African American farmers have had to wait for justice. Today there will be justice, but it will not come without a fight against bigotry, intolerance, and the champions of inequality. The fact that some Republican voices, including a Member from Minnesota, are calling the settlement with African American farmers a fraud and a scam reflects the very racial intolerance and discrimination that are at the root of this settlement.

With this legislation, the Federal Government can honor its commitment in a fiscally responsible manner. The funding is completely offset. The Senate passed it by unanimous consent. If it passes the House today, it will go directly to the President for his signature. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the Senate Amendments to H.R. 4783 because American Indians and African American farmers have waited long enough.

IN HONOR OF ALBANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 1, 2010

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Albanian Independence Day. As the Albanian community in Greater Cleveland gathers to celebrate, I join them in appreciation of their rich history and culture.

Known as Day of the Flag among Albanians, November 28, 1912 marks the day that the Republic of Albania became a sovereign nation after approximately 500 years of occupation by the Ottoman Empire. After this liberation, the country still faced 51 years of occupation under fascist Italy and the Soviet Union, emerging again in 1991. In part because they spent so many years under foreign rule, the Albanian people take deep pleasure in their independence.

This pleasure manifests each year on the Day of the Flag, marked by concerts, banquets, and celebrations. In Tirana, the nation's capitol, the President, Prime Minister, and Mayor appear at a flag raising ceremony and visit the graves of soldiers who fell in battle. Despite the cold, enthusiastic citizens attend the ceremony, waving the national colors.

Cleveland is home to a strong Albanian community, descendants of late nineteenth century immigrants and people seeking freedom and opportunity after World War II. This community has succeeded in preserving their heritage while wholeheartedly supporting American society, thereby contributing to the unique richness and diversity of our national culture.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and celebration of the Albanian Day of the Flag. May every American of Albanian heritage hold memories of their past forever in their hearts, remembering the day that their forbears gained their freedom.

HONORING CHARLIE KRUSE

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 1, 2010

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Charlie Kruse, President of the Missouri Farm Bureau, who is retiring after 18 years of service.

Charlie is a proud native of Stoddard County where he and his wife own and operate a grain farm. He is a graduate of Arkansas State University and the University of Missouri, where he earned his master of science in agronomy in 1973.

Recognizing Charlie's exceptional talent and commitment to agriculture, Missouri Governor John Ashcroft appointed him director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture in 1985. In 1990, Kruse served on President George Bush's Council on Rural America, the only Missourian named to the Council. He also served on U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills' Intergovernmental Advisory Committee and on USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service Advisory Committee. In 1991, Kruse accepted the position of executive vice presi-

dent of the North American Equipment Dealers Association, and resigned that position in August 1992 to seek the presidency of Missouri Farm Bureau.

In his 18 years as president of the Missouri Farm Bureau, Kruse has helped countless Missouri farmers who have reaped the benefits of his advocacy. The Missouri Farm Bureau is losing a capable and experienced leader whose tireless efforts have served to benefit all of our State's citizens, including me. During his tenure, Missouri Farm Bureau has seen tremendous growth in membership from 77,000 to over 108,000 farm families.

The accomplishments during Charlie Kruse's career are far too numerous to list. We are thankful for his efforts not only at the local and State levels but also the Federal level. From his testimony before Congress to his many advisory positions at USDA and involvement with the most recent farm bill, Charlie's unwavering support for sound and responsible agricultural policy serves as a model to everyone in the industry.

Charlie has so much to be proud of beyond his accomplishments in the policy arena. Missouri cannot thank him enough for his service in the Missouri National Guard and to the University of Missouri. I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude for all that he has given.

As he returns home to Stoddard County, Charlie can do so with great pride, knowing that in the span of his career he has accomplished so much and helped so many. While he will be missed, I wish him the very best that retirement has to offer.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Charlie Kruse for his service to the State of Missouri and to American agriculture.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN H. WEED

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 1, 2010

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to John H. Weed upon his retirement from the Ohlone College Board of Trustees in Fremont, California. Mr. Weed attended his final board meeting on November 10, 2010. First elected in 1977, he served on the Board of Trustees for 33 years.

Mr. Weed holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and Juris Doctor of Law degree from the University of Santa Clara. He received a Master of Business Administration in Finance from Eastern New Mexico University. He was a Graduate Research Associate in Agricultural Economics and a graduate student with the Department of Hydrology and Water Resources at the University of Arizona.

He has been an elected director of the Alameda County Water District since November 1995. Since 1990, Mr. Weed has served as a Director of the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency and Regional Financial Authority, representing customers of the Hetch Hetchy Water System.

Mr. Weed is a member of Rotary International, and he has been or is currently involved in myriad civic activities, which include